



Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society
www.birdsonthebay.ca

From: 'jesa@birdsonthebay.ca'

Sent: Monday, June 14, 2010 11:39 AM

To: PRESS RELEASE

Subject: Hordes of kids Innocently decimate shore crabs at Beecher Place

HELP THE BELEAGUERED OCEAN ANIMALS BY HELPING A SHORE CRAB AT HOME

June 10 Beecher Place - Crescent Beach.

Every kid loves to turn over the rocks and chase the shore crabs. It's instinctual with prey of that size and speed and harmlessness- kinda cat and mouse. Johnny has a great day at the beach and compares how many crabs he caught with Melvin on the bus home. Without knowing it, or just too excited, they killed many crabs and other beach creatures while enjoying the day on this beautiful swathe of intertidal ocean.

The problem is that crabs die in buckets without lots of water. Or are suffocated enough to die after they are dumped out. Every year they are innocently decimated over only 5 weeks, when thousands of kids visit the Beecher Place section of Crescent Beach.

On Thurs June 10, 2010 on Crescent Beach there were 7 school buses, 3 marked Abbotsford, 2 unseen by me, 1 Surrey. At 25 kids per bus that's 175 kids hitting the beach at exactly 9:30 am. My class group and at least 3 others adds another 100 = 275 kids daily. This happens annually end of May to end school year. From Tues to Fri over 5 weeks, at least 5500 kids visit the Beecher Place section of Crescent Beach.

Carolyn Prentice, coordinator of the Beach Hero program saw a similar load at 1001 Stairs (end 15A St in Surrey) with buses from Abbotsford and Langley. It is a remote location and there is no parking for cars let alone buses. We have no idea how these school districts found out about 1001 Stairs. Carolyn, at the contact info here, has more info on what she is seeing there currently.

Last year, there was a letter to the Now Editor regarding the destruction of White Rock beach by the same cause. See http://www.birdsonthebay.ca/pdf_files/Let%20Ed%20re%20Beach%20Etiquette.pdf

Coincidentally and unfortunately, this is the most fragile time for crabs and marine babies of every species, just born in the last month. They are clinging to the rocks on the shoreline, lucky to get that foothold. The larvae have to avoid open water. They are food for the grey whale still seen feeding in Boundary Bay

until yesterday. Food for yearling salmon hitting the ocean for the first time. Every year I see a decline in the abundance of shore crabs along the Beecher Place section of Crescent Beach.

CARE of CRABS:

In a pail, crabs need about 2-3 inches of water and they need it to be refreshed every 10 minutes. **They have gills. They breathe water.**

They need to be returned to their home, where they were found, after about 20 minutes. They live there because it is a good habitat for them.

People carry them into unfavourable places without noticing the habitats we are in. It's all beach to us.

Crabs are picked off by birds on swathes of exposed sand. If released too high up the beach, they can't get back to a moist hole before they drown in air.

If they are soft, leave them alone.

Most crabs have also molted recently and many still have soft shells. Did you know that many of the "dead" crabs washing up on the beaches right now aren't dead? They are molted shells like a snake's shed skin. Crabs climb out the back of their shells-even pulling out their eyes- when they need more space to grow. Their new shell is soft for a few weeks while they puff it out to allow space to grow. They have also recently given birth to the next generation of crabs, tiny- the size of a few grains of sand.

Millions of tiny and microscopic larvae of every fish, crab, clam, etc marine species are floating around Boundary Bay right now. Great shelter is found under rocks for them since the current is enough to dislodge them. When those rocks are tipped over or rocked, those tiny baby creatures are killed along with the previous generations lucky enough to land on that rock. The eelgrass in deeper water provides the same shelter for creatures that can cling to it.